

Public Law 102-178
102d Congress

Joint Resolution

Designating 1992 as the "Year of the Gulf of Mexico".

Dec. 2, 1991
[H.J. Res. 327]

Whereas the Gulf of Mexico, which is bordered by the United States on 3 sides, is a national treasure deserving of our time, attention, and best stewardship efforts;

Whereas, although the Gulf of Mexico is a body of water that is of prime economic importance to the United States and is a recreational retreat for millions of Americans, there are signs of serious long-term environmental damage appearing throughout the marine ecosystem of the Gulf of Mexico;

Whereas commercial fishing in the Gulf of Mexico accounts for more than 20 percent of the total commercial fish yield of the United States, and the Gulf of Mexico currently yields close to twice the amount of shrimp than all other United States fisheries combined;

Whereas the estuaries, wetlands, and barrier islands of the Gulf of Mexico provide critical habitat for large populations of finfish, shellfish, waterfowl, shorebirds, colonial nesting birds, and 75 percent of the migratory waterfowl traversing the United States;

Whereas the Gulf of Mexico is an economic cornerstone for the States that border it, in that 90 percent of domestic offshore production of oil and gas comes from the Gulf of Mexico and close to 50 percent of the United States shipping tonnage passes through Gulf of Mexico ports;

Whereas it is estimated that tourism-related dollars in States that border the Gulf of Mexico contribute an estimated \$20,000,000,000 to the economy of the United States, drawing millions of sport fishermen and beach users annually;

Whereas during the past few decades the Gulf of Mexico has begun to show signs of deteriorating environmental quality, including excess nutrients, toxic substance and pesticide contamination, and the presence of human pathogens, which are contributing to the deteriorating water quality and closed fishing and shellfish areas in the Gulf of Mexico;

Whereas shoreline development, canal and channel dredging, and alterations of freshwater flow into the Gulf of Mexico estuaries are causing extensive losses of marshes, mangroves, and seagrass beds, which are critical and highly productive habitats to a wide variety of estuarine and marine organisms; and

Whereas it is in the best interest of the United States to preserve and enhance the natural and economic resources of the Gulf of Mexico by heightening awareness of the need for active participation in the protection of the Gulf of Mexico: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That—

(1) 1992 is designated as the "Year of the Gulf of Mexico";

(2) all Federal and State agencies which have responsibility for matters affecting the Gulf of Mexico should take a responsible role in the cooperative effort to increase the awareness of

the public regarding the immeasurable value of this resource and the current conditions which threaten its aesthetic and economic value; and

(3) the President is authorized and requested to issue a proclamation recognizing such year and calling upon the people of the United States to observe such year with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

Approved December 2, 1991.

LEGISLATIVE HISTORY—H.J. Res. 327 (S.J. Res. 194):

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, Vol. 137 (1991):

Oct. 22, considered and passed House.

Nov. 18, considered and passed Senate.